

Excerpt from *Coaching Youth Football, 5th Edition*

ASEP

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FIVE TOOLS OF AN EFFECTIVE COACH

Have you purchased the traditional coaching tools—things such as whistles, coaching clothes, sport shoes, and a clipboard? They'll help you in the act of coaching, but to be successful, you'll need five other tools that cannot be bought. These tools are available only through self-examination and hard work; they're easy to remember with the acronym COACH:

| | |
|----------|---------------|
| C | Comprehension |
| O | Outlook |
| A | Affection |
| C | Character |
| H | Humor |



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C Comprehension

Comprehension of the rules, tactics, and skills of football is required. You must understand the elements of the sport. To improve your comprehension of football, take the following steps:

- Read about the rules of football.
- Read about the fundamentals of football and football plays.
- Read additional football coaching books, including those available from the American Sport Education Program (ASEP).
- Contact youth football organizations, including American Youth Football (www.americanyouthfootball.com).
- Attend football coaching clinics (through the Coaching Academy Program, National Football League, or National Football Foundation).
- Talk with more experienced coaches.
- Observe local college, high school, and youth football games.
- Watch football games on television.

In addition to having football knowledge, you must implement proper training and safety methods so that your players can participate with little risk of injury. Even then, injuries may occur. And more often than not, you'll be the first person responding to your players' injuries, so be sure you understand basic emergency care procedures.



O Outlook

This coaching tool refers to your perspective and goals—what you seek as a coach. The most common coaching objectives are to (a) have fun; (b) help players develop their physical, mental, and social skills; and (c) win. Thus, your outlook involves your priorities, your planning, and your vision for the future.

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ASEP has a motto that will help you keep your outlook in line with the best interests of the kids on your team. It summarizes in four words all you need to remember when establishing your coaching priorities:

Athletes First, Winning Second

This motto recognizes that striving to win is an important, even vital, part of sports. But it emphatically states that no efforts in striving to win should be made at the expense of the players' well-being, development, and enjoyment. Take the following actions to better define your outlook:

- With the members of your coaching staff, determine your priorities for the season.
- Prepare for situations that may challenge your priorities.
- Set goals for yourself and your players that are consistent with your priorities.
- Plan how you and your players can best attain your goals.
- Review your goals frequently to be sure that you are staying on track.

A Affection

Another vital tool you will want to have in your coaching kit is a genuine concern for the young people you coach. This requires having a passion for kids, a desire to share with them your enjoyment and knowledge of football, and the patience and understanding that allow each player to grow from his involvement in sport.

You can demonstrate your affection and patience in many ways, including the following:

- Make an effort to get to know each player on your team.
- Treat each player as an individual.
- Empathize with players trying to learn new and difficult skills.
- Treat players as you would like to be treated under similar circumstances.
- Control your emotions.
- Show your enthusiasm for being involved with your team.
- Keep an upbeat tempo and positive tone in all of your communications.



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C Character

The fact that you have decided to coach young football players probably means that you think participation in sport is important. But whether or not that participation develops character

in your players depends as much on you as it does on the sport itself. How can you help your players build character?

Having good character means modeling appropriate behaviors for sport and life. That means more than just saying the right things. What you say and what you do must match. There is no place in coaching for the “Do as I say, not as I do” philosophy. Challenge, support, encourage, and reward every youngster, and your players will be more likely to accept, even celebrate, their differences. Be in control before, during, and after all practices and games. And don’t be afraid to admit that you were wrong. No one is perfect!

Each member of your coaching staff should consider the following steps to becoming a good role model:

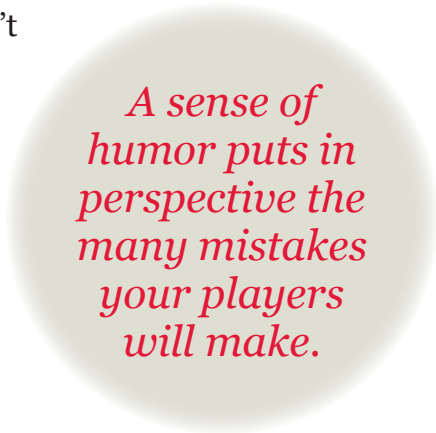
- Take stock of your strengths and weaknesses.
- Build on your strengths.
- Set goals for yourself to improve on those areas that you don’t want to see copied by your players.
- If you slip up, apologize to your team and to yourself. You’ll do better next time.

Humor

Humor is an often-overlooked coaching tool. For our purposes, humor means having the ability to laugh at yourself and with your players during practices and games. Nothing helps balance the seriousness of a skill session like a chuckle or two. And a sense of humor puts in perspective the many mistakes your players will make. So don’t get upset over each miscue or respond negatively to erring players. Allow your players and yourself to enjoy the ups, and don’t dwell on the downs.

Here are some tips for injecting humor into your practices:

- Make practices fun by including a variety of activities.
- Keep all players involved in games and skill practices.
- Consider laughter by your players to be a sign of enjoyment, not of waning discipline.
- Smile!



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To order a copy of the book *Coaching Youth Football, 5th Edition* click [here](#) or call toll free at 800-747-4457.

Coaching Youth Football, 5th Edition serves as the text for two online courses developed by the American Sport Education Program (ASEP). Coaching Youth Football: The AYF Way is the official coach-certification course of American Youth Football (AYF). Coaches and administrators affiliated with AYF can visit www.AYFCoaching.com for more information or to register for the course. The ASEP Coaching Youth Football online course is available to all youth sport organizations and coaches. For more information about this course or other ASEP courses and resources, please call 800-747-5698 or visit www.ASEP.com.

About the Author

Lead by
example.

Athletes
first,
Winning
Second!

Joe Galat serves as the president of AYF. He is also employed by FieldTurf Tarkett as vice president of sales and dean of the FieldTurf Sports Science Institute. Joe's leadership began early as captain of the Harvey High School (Painesville, Ohio) and Miami University (Ohio) football and wrestling teams. At Miami University, he was elected president of the Varsity Letterman's Club and was named Outstanding Student Athlete in his senior year. Playing honors included selections to the All-Ohio All-Star High School Team and All-Mid-American Conference.

Joe's football experience was honed by some of the game's greats: Bo Schembechler, Carm Cozza, and John McVay. When Pro Football Hall of Fame coach George Allen was owner of Montreal, he appointed Joe to be his head coach. Joe then went on to become head coach and general manager of the British Columbia Lions of the Canadian Football League. He coached college football at Miami University, Yale University, University of Kentucky, and Youngstown State University. He was also an assistant coach in the NFL for both the New York Giants and the Houston Oilers. In 1982, Joe was inducted into the Miami University Hall of Fame. He was also inducted into the Painesville Harvey High School Hall of Fame (along with the NFL's winningest coach, Don Shula).

After his coaching days, Joe was national color commentator for CBC-TV Sports. This experience gave him the distinction of having held every position in organized football (player, coach, manager, broadcaster, and youth executive). Joe has participated in youth football clinics in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and throughout Europe and Russia. Joe was also honored as a Kentucky Colonel by Governor Wendell Ford.



The American Sport Education Program (ASEP) is the leading provider of youth, high school, and elite-level sport education programs in the USA. Rooted in the philosophy of "Athletes first, winning second," ASEP has educated more than one and a half million coaches, officials, sport administrators, parents, and athletes. For more than 25 years, local, state, and national sport organizations have partnered with ASEP to lead the way in making sport a safe, successful, and enjoyable experience for all involved. For more information on ASEP sport education courses and resources, call 800-747-5698, e-mail ASEP@hkusa.com, or visit www.ASEP.com.